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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002739

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: INDIAN, PAKISTANI NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORS
DISCUSS TERRORISM, CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

Classified By: A/DCM John Davison for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

11. (C) Summary. In their first meeting together as counterparts, Indian National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan and Pakistani National Security Advisor Mahmud Ali Durrani:

- explored ways to revive the Indo-Pak joint anti-terror mechanism;
- discussed allegations of continuing ceasefire violations along the Line of Control;
- talked about the bombing of India's embassy in Kabul, with Durrani categorically denying any involvement by Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); and
- expressed a desire for closer relations and further similar discussions.

During his visit to India, Durrani also met with Prime Minister Singh, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, in talks also centered on terrorism but also including trade, water sharing rights, and the issue of Kashmir. End Summary.

Opening of a New Channel for Dialogue

12. (C) National Security Advisor, M.K. Narayanan and his Pakistani counterpart, Mahmud Ali Durrani, met in New Delhi October 13-14 for talks centered on counter-terrorism, ceasefire violations along the Line of Control, Kashmir, Afghanistan, water sharing and cross-border trade. Durrani's visit was at the initiative and invitation of Narayanan; while the two had known each other for years, including as interlocutors in Track II settings, it was their first meeting as National Security Advisors. Indian and Pakistani officials confirmed to Poloffs what had been reported widely in the press, that the atmosphere for the talks was positive and cordial, even as the two exchanged candid views on some very sensitive issues, such as the bombing of India's embassy in Kabul in July.

"No. No. No." To ISI Role in Kabul Bombing

13. (C) The main focus of the meetings, according to both Rudrendra Pandon, Director in the Prime Minister's Office, and Irfan Ahmed, First Secretary at the Pakistani Embassy in New Delhi, was to discuss terrorism issues affecting the two countries with a goal of reinvigorating the Joint

Anti-Terrorism Mechanism (JATM) begun in 2006 but relatively inactive recently. While public statements did not explicitly mention the JATM, and contacts in Narayanan's office were especially tight-lipped about the meetings, media, such as the Hindustan Times, reported the JATM will convene again late in October. Narayanan reportedly confronted Durrani with India's case that ISI had a role in the Kabul bombing on July 7, with Durrani denying any GOP involvement. Later, following his meeting with Foreign Minister Mukherjee, Durrani, responding to questions from the media, emphatically denied ISI had been involved: "No. No. No. Incorrect." was his reply.

Ceasefire Talks, Then an Agreement to Refrain

14. (C) Narayanan also pressed Durrani on cross-border infiltrations and ceasefire violations along the Line of Control, according to press reports, the latter of which, by India's count, had numbered over 30 in the past couple months. While neither Pakistani nor Indian contacts would confirm the ceasefire conversation, just two days after the Narayanan-Durrani meeting the Pakistan Rangers and Indian Border Security Force announced an agreement to refrain from ceasefire violations along the LoC.

Durrani Presses for CD Progress, Even Without Reduction in Terror

15. (C) Durrani reportedly asked his Indian interlocutors to
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not wait for terrorism to completely cease before putting a real effort into resolving issues falling under the Composite Dialogue, particularly disputes over the Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek. He also raised Pakistan's concerns over water sharing issues arising from reduced flow in the Chenab River. Narayanan assured Durrani that India would abide by the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty.

16. (U) In their joint statement, Narayanan and Durrani agreed to continue their dialogue at a future date, with Narayanan accepting Durrani's invitation to hold the next round in Pakistan.

Comment: Talk Is Cheap, but Good in This Case

17. (C) Comment. While there were no major announcements from this visit other than the usual proclamations of "the discussions were most productive" and "covered all issues of mutual concern and interest" (as stated in the perfunctory press communique), it comes at a time when India is eager to find a Pakistani counterpart willing to engage on counterterrorism. Durrani seems to have filled that role and, judging by the exceptionally guarded response from our contacts, it appears these talks went beyond Delhi's expectations in terms of engaging Islamabad in open discussion. Pakistani Embassy's Ahmed, too, characterized the discussions as "unexpectedly positive." The Indian government these days seems willing to talk to anyone about anything and call it a success, but this time, it appears a new open communications channel has been established. Given that Composite Dialogue and other channels of Indo-Pak communication had been lagging as of late, while infiltrations, ceasefire infractions and terrorism were all rising, any constructive talk at this time has to be seen positively.

18. (C) Comment continued. One curious note, however speculative, came from Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, who related to Poloff that he had asked Durrani during one of the meetings whether the Pakistani National Security Advisor came under the Prime Minister's office, or the President's office. Durrani responded, "It's part of the President's office, so

far," -- a comment which Ambassador Mansingh said he felt indicated a lack of confidence by Durrani in President Zardari's staying power.

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